

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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P R 171900Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6587

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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CINCLANT FOR POLAD

COMCARIBSEAFRON

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 0104

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: GJ, PINS, PINT

SUBJ: DEMONSTRATIONS GAIN MOMENTUM IN GRENADA

REF: BRIDGETOWN 0083

1. SIXTH AND LARGEST IN SERIES OF MASS PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST GRENADA GOVERNMENT OF PREMIER ERIC GAIRY TOOK PLACE IN CAPITAL OF ST. GEORGE'S JANUARY 16. IN ISLAND'S SECOND LARGEST TOWN, GRENVILLE, THREE PERSONS REPORTEDLY INJURED DURING MARCH ORGANIZED BY NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT IN CLASH BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATORS. ORGANIZED PRINCIPALLY BY COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WORKERS' UNION (CIWW) AND SEAMEN AND WATERFRONT WORKERS' UNION (SWWU), ST GEORGE'S DEMONSTRATION REPORTEDLY DREW MORE THAN 10,000 PARTICIPANTS. ACCORDING TO REPORT BY GRENADIAN CORRESPONDENT LESLIE SEON, BROADCAST OVER BARBADOS REDIFFUSION RADION, LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICE ARMED WITH TEAR GAS APPEARED ON STREETS FOR FIRST TIME. POLICE AIDES, WHOSE DISBANDMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF PRINCIPAL ISSUES IN CURRENT PROTEST, WERE REPORTED

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TO BE GUARDING KIRPALANI'S DEPT STORE, PART OF LARGE TRINIDAD-

BASED CHAIN, AND OTHER BUSINESSES THAT HAVE REMAINED OPEN DURING STRIKE. STRIKE LEADERS HAVE THREATENED TO IMPOSE BOYCOTT ON BUSINESSES NOT PARTICIPATING IN STRIKE, MANY OF THEM OWNED BY SYRIAN AND LEBANESE EXPATRIATES, ONCE SITUATION RETURNS TO NORMAL.

2. IN TELEPHONE INTERVIEW TO BARBADOS "ADVOCATE-NEWS" JAN 15, GAIRY REITERATED HIS DETERMINATION TO REMAIN IN OFFICE. GAIRY CLAIMED TO HAVE SUPPORT OF 90 PERCENT OF POPULACE AND SAID HIS RESIGNATION WOULD BE "GREATEST ACT OF TREACHERY TO THE PEOPLE OF GRENADA." HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT DEMONSTRATIONS AND BOYCOTT OF GRENADA-BOUND GOODS HAVE HAD NO EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT. OTHER SOURCES, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THAT GASOLINE AND SOME BASIC FOOD COMMODITIES (RICE AND FLOUR) IN EXTREMELY SHORT SUPPLY. ACCORDING TO REPORT JAN 16 FROM GRENADA-BASED TRINIDAD "EXPRESS" CORRESPONDENT JEFF HACKET, IMPORTED FOOD SUPPLIES LIKELY TO RUN OUT WITHIN ONE WEEK, PREMIUM GASOLINE WITHIN THREE DAYS, AND REGULAR GASOLINE WITHIN NINE DAYS. KEROSENE DESCRIBED AS "DESPERATELY" SHORT.

3. SWWU AND CIWU HAVE REPORTEDLY ASKED AND RECEIVED SUPPORT OF INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL EMPLOYEES IN EXTENDING BOYCOTT ON GRENADA SHIPPING FOLLOWING REPORTS THAT GOG ATTEMPTING TO SECURE ADDITIONAL OIL SUPPLIES FROM VENEZUELA. FINANCE MINISTER GEORGE HOSTEN SAID TO HAVE FLOWN TO CARACAS EARLIER THIS WEEK TO SEEK ALTERNATE SOURCE OF FUEL FOLLOWING DECISION BY TRINIDAD OIL WORKERS TO BLOCK SHIPMENTS FROM THAT COUNTRY.

4. PRESS REPORTS THAT HMG HAS STATED RESIGNATION OF GOVERNOR DAME HILDA BYNOE WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON QUEEN'S RECEIPT OF DAME HILDA'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION. DAME HILDA ANNOUNCED JAN 14 THAT SHE HAD SUBMITTED RESIGNATION FOLLOWING GOG'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GAIRY HAD ADVISED HMG TO TERMINATE HER APPOINTMENT. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, GAIRY WILL CONSULT WITH FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME ON NAMING OF SUCCESSOR. BELIEVED THAT GAIRY MAY NOMINATE HOUSE SPEAKER R.C.P. MOORE. GOG ALSO ANNOUNCED JAN 15 THAT GOVERNOR'S HUSBAND, PETER BYNOE, HAS BEEN REPLACED BY CABINET SECRETARY FRANKLYN SHERMAN AS CHAIRMAN
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OF INDEPENDENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE ORGANIZING FEB 7 CELEBRATIONS.

5. THREE-MAN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INVESTIGATING ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN GRENADA HAS ADJOURNED UNTIL AFTER INDEPENDENCE. NO REASON GIVEN FOR ADJOURNMENT. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION WAS ONE OF CONCESSIONS WON FROM GAIRY BY PROTESTERS IN LATE NOVEMBER. MEMBERS OF COMMISSION, TWO DISTINGUISHED JAMAICAN KURISTS AND A JAMAICAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP, WERE CHOSEN

SOLELY BY GOVERNOR BYNOE, AND IT IS NOT YET KNOWN WHETHER HER
DEPARTURE WILL AFFECT COMMISSION'S TENURE OR COMPOSITION.
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